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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5470  
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
AMEMBASSY ALMATY  
AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE  
AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA J5//  
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
NSC WASHDC  
AMCONSUL LAHORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002617

C O R R E C T E D COPY (PARAGRAPH MARKINGS)

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TAGS: PARM PREL PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN TESTS "GHAURI" MISSILE

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY CDA ALAN EASTHAM, 1.5D.

2. (C) SUMMARY: FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAMSHAD AHMAD SUMMONED P-5 CHIEFS OF MISSION ON A HALF-HOUR'S NOTICE APRIL 6 TO INFORM US OF THE "SUCCESSFUL TEST" OF THE "INDIGENOUS" GHAURI MISSILE, WHICH HE SAID HAD A 1,500 KM RANGE FOR A 700 KG PAYLOAD. HALF HIS PRESENTATION WAS ON THE MISSILE; THE OTHER HALF WAS AN INDIA-CENTRIC JUSTIFICATION FOR MISSILE TESTING. CHARGE' OFFERED AN INFORMAL IMMEDIATE REACTION IN PRIVATE, NOTING THAT THE TEST WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE SUGGESTION FOR RESTRAINT MADE IN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S LETTER OF MARCH 20 TO THE PRIME MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAMSHAD AHMAD CALLED IN THE AMBASSADORS OF RUSSIA, U.K. AND FRANCE AND THE CHINESE AND AMERICAN CHARGES ON APRIL 6. FOLLOWING IS A DIGEST OF HIS PRESENTATION:

-- I HAVE ASKED YOU TO COME TO INFORM YOU THAT AS A PART OF PAKISTAN'S INTEGRATED MISSILE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, TODAY WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT-TESTED THE SURFACE-TO-SURFACE "GHAURI" MISSILE IN THE HATF SERIES. (COMMENT: AN ACCOMPANYING PRESS RELEASE CALLS THIS MISSILE THE "HATF-FIVE" (ROMAN NUMERAL HATF-V).

-- THIS MISSILE HAS A RANGE OF 1,500 KM AND A PAYLOAD OF 700KG.

-- THIS TEST REPRESENTS A STEP FORWARD IN OUR INDIGENOUS MISSILE AND SATELLITE LAUNCH PROGRAMS. WE HAVE ACHIEVED THIS INDIGENOUS CAPABILITY THROUGH THE COMMITMENT OF PAKISTANI SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS.

-- WE DO NOT HAVE TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY REGARDING INDIAN FLIGHT TESTS. INDIA HAS CONDUCTED 16 TESTS OF THE PAKISTAN-SPECIFIC PRITHVI MISSILE AND HAS ALREADY DEPLOYED IT ALONG OUR BORDERS. INDIA HAS ALSO TESTED THE AGNI MISSILE FOUR TIMES.

-- IN SPITE OF THE INDIAN PROVOCATIVE TESTS IN THEIR NUCLEAR AND BALLISTIC MISSILE PROGRAMS, WE HAVE EXERCISED EXTREME RESTRAINT. BUT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE COMPLACENT ABOUT PAKISTAN'S SECURITY.

-- LET ME REITERATE THAT PAKISTAN WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW RESTRAINT. WE DO NOT WANT TO SPARK A NUCLEAR AND MISSILE ARMS RACE IN SOUTH ASIA.

-- WE HAVE ALREADY MADE FORMAL PROPOSALS TO INDIA FOR MUTUAL AND

EQUITABLE RESTRAINT IN THE NUCLEAR AND MISSILE AREA WITHOUT RECEIVING ANY RESPONSE. WE ARE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIA ON NUCLEAR AND BALLISTIC MISSILE ISSUES AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR BILATERAL DIALOGUE, WHICH AS YOU KNOW REMAINS STALEMATED BECAUSE OF PROCEDURAL DIFFICULTIES.

-- ON OUR PART WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO OVERCOME THESE PROCEDURAL DIFFICULTIES; WE HOPE WE WILL BE ABLE TO RESUME IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

14. (C) THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER ASKED WHERE THE TEST HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT; THE FS SAID "IN PAKISTAN, ON LAND." SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS FROM THE GROUP REVOLVED AROUND THE DIALOGUE WITH INDIA, WITH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY OFFERING NOTHING NEW. ACCOMPANYING PRESS RELEASE (FAXED TO SA/PAB) ADDS NOTHING TO WHAT IS REPORTED ABOVE.

15. (C) FOLLOWING THE GROUP SESSION, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ASKED TO SEE CHARGE' PRIVATELY TO DISCUSS ANOTHER MATTER. IN HIS OFFICE, CHARGE' SAID THAT NEWS OF THIS TEST MAY BE TAKEN BADLY IN WASHINGTON, SINCE IT DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS THE SUGGESTIONS IN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S LETTER OF MARCH 20 TO THE PRIME MINISTER. THE U.S. BELIEVES THE DECISION TO TEST A NEW MISSILE COULD HAVE BEEN POSTPONED IN ORDER TO LET THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISH ITSELF. HOW THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT WILL REACT IS UNPREDICTABLE.

16. (C) THE FOREIGN SECRETARY RESPONDED BY REITERATING THE POINTS CITED ABOVE ON INDIAN TESTS, ADDING THAT "NO ONE EVER SAID ANYTHING" ABOUT INDIAN MISSILE TESTING. CHARGE' SAID THAT OF COURSE IT WAS UP TO PAKISTAN HOW PAKISTAN TOOK CARE OF ITS OWN SECURITY, BUT FROM HIS RECOLLECTION IT HAD BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE THE INDIANS HAD COMPLETED THE "TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION" PHASE OF AGNI TESTING. THE DIFFICULTY OF MISSILE SYSTEMS WAS THEIR DESTABILIZING EFFECT IN TIMES OF TENSION. ADDITIONAL SECRETARY TARIQ ALTAQ QUICKLY ADDED THAT THE BJP PLATFORM CALLED FOR "INDUCTING" NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO INDIA'S FORCES, A POINT WHICH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY QUICKLY ENDORSED. CHARGE' CLOSED THE SESSION BY SAYING THAT AS THE SECRETARY HAD SUGGESTED IN HER LETTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD ACCEPTED IN HIS REPLY, THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION DURING THE VISIT OF AMBASSADORS RICHARDSON AND INDERFURTH AND MR. RIEDEL.

17. (C) COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD USE AMBASSADOR KHOKHAR'S CALL ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY INDERFURTH TODAY TO CONVEY MORE FORMAL REGRETS ABOUT PAKISTAN'S DECISION TO TEST THIS MISSILE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER SPECIFICALLY REQUESTING RESTRAINT IN MISSILE TESTING. (FYI, WE HAD A SUGGESTION FROM ANOTHER SENIOR PAKISTANI OVER THE WEEKEND THAT SOME AT LEAST THINK PAKISTAN DID EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN NOT TESTING BEFORE MARCH 23 AND IN NOT DISPLAYING THE MISSILE THAT DAY DURING THE PAKISTAN DAY PARADE.)

18. (C) NOTE ALSO THAT THIS IS DESCRIBED AS A "FLIGHT TEST," AND NOT/NOT AS INDUCTION OF THE MISSILE INTO PAKISTAN'S ARMED FORCES. THE PAKISTANIS VIEW THIS AS CATCHING UP TO THE INDIANS, SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO AGNI, AND NOT AS LEAPFROGGING THEIR MISSILE CAPABILITIES. THE TIMING IS CLEARLY RELATED TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE BJP GOVERNMENT IN INDIA AND EXTREME PAKISTANI NERVOUSNESS ABOUT BJP PRONOUNCEMENTS IN THE NUCLEAR AREA, SPECIFICALLY THE DECLARATIONS OF THE INTENTION TO "INDUCT" NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE PAKISTANIS DECIDED TO LAY DOWN A FIRM MARKER BOTH TO THE INDIANS AND THE PAKISTANI PUBLIC THAT PAKISTANI CAPABILITIES IN THIS FIELD ARE NOT INSIGNIFICANT. THIS TEST WILL PRESENT THE BJP-LED GOVERNMENT IN INDIA WITH A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE IN THE SECURITY FIELD AT THE MOMENT IT IS ESTABLISHING ITSELF IN DELHI.

EASTHAM